

HEREAFTER

And

INDIAN TRADITIONS

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PREFACE

The most precious treasure for an individual is his own life. It is because of human presence that the world appears charming, purposeful and worthwhile. In the absence of man on the earth, who could enjoy the hustle bustle of this life, relish picturesque and scenic settings, value cool breeze and flowing rivers, praise the beauty and grandeur of nature. In the nutshell, human absence would have rendered the world meaningless and futile.

However, life is not all cakes and ale. The world does not offer only bloom but wither too, it has flowers as well as spines, it provides pleasure and joy along with distress and agony, it not only serves life but death too. This is despite the fact that every individual looks forward to an endless blossom, an undecending youth and an eternal life, full of bliss.

If death terminates the existence of man and the journey of his life ends on his demise, it would be so tragic that the most cherished human aspirations and feelings will appear superficial and merely deceptive. Islam apprises the humanity not to indulge in and get carried away by any dazzles, deceptions and distractions. None of the allure and charm of this world is meaningless, nor the human desires mentioned above are mere delusions and fantasies. Every human fantasy or dream not only indicates but reassures that the life is evolutionary. Death is not the bottomline of life but is the completion of life, Islam, says. After the death there is unequivocal surety of a life free from fear, pain and struggle. Every human wish, present but unfulfilled, will be realiseable in that life.

The Islamic message of perfectly smooth and idealistic eternal life is motivating, heartening and drives people out from obscurity to lucidity. The enthralling Islamic

concept of life after death impels men get rid of uncertainty, brings objectivity and a ray of hope in the present life. This propitious message has been intermittently relayed to mankind by God — the Creator and Sustainer of the world.

It is imperative to know and remember that eternal, cheerful and flawless life, after death, would only be accorded to the most deserving human creatures. They will prove to deserve this by their attitude, behaviour character, deeds and lifestyle. Contrary to this, those people will deserve the wrath and rage of God who, inspite of getting an opportunity in the form of life, fritter it away. Their actions propel the humanity towards doom. Instead of bridging the gaps and patching up differences, they create rifts and hatred in the society. In lieu of being generous and compassionate they are acquisitive and self-seekers and rather than being humble and considerate they are ruthless and arrogant. These folks would be so severely flogged by God that it is unimaginable today.

While examining the literature of primitive Indian religions, it is noticed that the reiteration of Islam is diametrically correct: God has invariably cautioned the humanity about the real life being not this, but hereafter. He has unceasingly admonished mankind to wake up; open up eyes and widen the horizons, stretch the perspectives to look beyond visibles. God has also urged people from time to time, to lead the life veraciously and benevolently. True message of God has always been this, though there have been serious efforts to dissemble. This is well reflected in the lives and religious scriptures of certain nations. Reading through this book will corroborate that it is an earnest endeavour to crystallize that the above statements are not hypothetical but real. It is hoped that an objective and observant study of this script will help draw the right conclusion. The concern here is not just the inference but taking a firm and decisive step in future, for a brighter future.

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A WORD FROM THE TRANSLATOR

The need for this translation stemmed from my close association and deep interaction with many non-muslim friends and workmates. They gave me the impression as if the concept of Hereafter is an exclusive Islamic product. Other religions either do not acknowledge this conception or if they do, it is an entirely different notion. It convinced me that a fair picture needs to be presented in order to remove much of the distortions that have crept into the perceptions of today's, though elite and upwardly mobile yet, grossly misled lot of compatriots.

It is my privilege to translate this thoroughly researched and logically presented booklet of a highly revered and respected Islamic scholar, *Janab* Farooq Khan *Saheb*. I am conscious of my limitations but felt dire need for this translation into English. Shortcomings in translation may, therefore, be overlooked in view of the spirit that motivated me, namely to prove that the concept of Hereafter has been the hallmark of all the pristine Indian religions.

Mansoor Durrani

SCRUTINY OF FAITHS AND VIEWS

It is a gigantic task to differentiate between Good and Evil by reviewing or examining various faiths and views and critically analysing them, thereafter. Such efforts, often, become the victim of prejudice and communal biases and inclinations of the person involved tend to intervene. Secondly, unfamiliarity with truth and lack of knowledge frequently propel him in a wrong direction. Consequently, all efforts in this regard prove futile. He fails to produce fruitful result of his efforts which could help untie the knots of pre-conceived notions and Good and Evil is brought to the fore in an unambiguous manner. Rather, at times, such efforts even backfire and add up further confusion.

If the past efforts of analysing the feelings and views of nations are examined, everybody will unanimously approve the truthfulness of the above observation. Generally, studies conducted about a religion lack objectivity and the conclusion they lead to, is not accepted willingly and wholeheartedly. On the contrary, it is a common phenomenon that such efforts are initiated with a pre-determined frame of mind and all energies are converged to reassert the veracity of these pre-conceived views. All research and investigations or arguments are directed towards this end. All such findings or realities are grossly ignored or misinterpreted which could hamper drawing a "desired inference", which is already adjudicated. This is certainly not a rational and scientific method of conducting a research or studying a religion.

In reality, this is an acid test and despite of being unbiased and most sincere, reaching to the right conclusion may not be a plain sailing.

Like any other mission in life, this too requires the guidance and prop of God without which it is virtually

impossible to achieve the task smoothly. Prior to the divine revelation of Quran; when none of the previous Holy books Torah and Bible remained intact and in original shape, nor was there any group in sight to legitimately represent the truth, religions had virtually lost their enlightening characteristics. People had been leading the lives of ignorance and indifference, persistently for centuries. All the efforts made during this period, to seek the truth resulted in creating further confusion and suspicion rather than crystallizing the path of truth. The consequences of such studies done even after the revelation of Quran, without its guidance, have not been strikingly different either, from the pre-revaluation efforts. Besides hairsplitting, such attempts were aimed to prove Evil as Good and vice versa, which does not have even distant relation with either truth or rectitude.

QURAN AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF NATIONS

Quran is not a book of mere doctrines, code and regulations. Nor is it a crude compilation of some faiths or viewpoints, presented to the people and urging them to accept. In fact Quran-among other features — analytically studies the views and deeds of nations of varying times.

At the very outset, such reviews and analyses are presented in Quran. It explicitly analyses the beliefs and practices of the contemporary communities and other past nations. Their views and deeds are then objectively criticised.

Through these analyses and exegesis, addressees are introduced to the truth, by taking them back and forth into this very world of mortals.

As a result of this critical analysis, truth emerges crystal clear from any suspicion and perplexity. Facts, emerging from the logical and objective analysis of nations and societies are presented in peculiarly convincing, impressive and effective manner, towards the concluding chapters of Quran. Thus the entire Holy Quran appears to

have been compiled in the most scientific manner. The method of review and criticism adopted by Quran serves as a benchmark, to analyse the views and deeds of the nations of any time, and hence drawing fair conclusion is not too difficult. It will not be exaggeration to believe that factual explanation and commentary of ancient religious scriptures can be done better, by the possessor and believer of Quran than the believers of such books. Reason for staking such a claim is : they are the bearer of such a torch which most certainly serves as a yardstick to ascertain the veracity of those scriptures and gauge the ratio of fact and fiction they contain. Quran guides man to the correct path of life. On the other hand, it acts as an adjudicator to sort out mutual differences pertaining to thoughts and views. Besides, it also helps settle differing and contrasting views existing within one community or nation itself. Quran is, in reality, the canon to differentiate between genuine and spurious.

Even if a nation drifts far off the track into deviation and astray, one should remain optimistic. Despite of making incalculable changes in their holy books, noticeable signs of truth and honesty can still be traced and they can be guided back to the truth. They can be easily convinced, with reasoning, about their points of deviation.

At times, even one single word of a language reveals stunning secrets about the extent of variance over a period of time. To make this fact clearer, following are the instances of astray or deviation. *Shamshan* is a sanskrit word which denotes to the place, earmarked for Hindus to consign dead bodies of flames. The word itself, however, indicates an entirely different meaning. Originally, *Shamshan* was not a place to cremate people, but to bury them. This contention is substantiated and more crystallized by the following explanation. *Yask*, in his book *Nirukt* has given the meaning of the word, on the basis of its roots, a place to lay body. *Acharya* Chitlej Mohan Sen has also affirmed the above views in his book *Bhartya Sanskriti*. Dr. Bhola Nath Tiwary has expressed his views in the following words :

"The word *Shamshan* indicates that earlier, Hindus did not use to burn dead bodies, rather they would bury like Muslims and Christians. These days many scholars, on certain other grounds, have been reaching conclusion that earlier *Aryans* used to bury their dead. They borrowed the concept of consigning mortal remains to flames, subsequently from *non-aryans*". *Shabdon Ka jeevan* Page 36

Vedas have also testified about Hindus burying dead bodies. For instance, one of the *mantras* chanted at the time of burial, then, is: 'Now you see, but will never see the light of sun again. O land, wrap him like mother wraps cloth around her child'. *Atharva Veda* 18:2:50

There is another glaring example of divergence in a *sanskrit* word called *Goghan*. Though, the word is used to mean guest, this is combination of two separate words: *Go* meaning cow and *ghan*, kill. *Padyachander Kosh* has interpreted it as *Gohatyante Yashe* which means, for whom the cow is killed. It makes explicitly clear that in ancient India, cow used to be killed and served for the hospitality of guests. Later on, literature has used the word *aghanya* for cow which means not to be killed. The word *aghanya* itself indicates that earlier cow used to be *ghanya*. In this matter too, Dr. Bhola Nath Tiwary has expressed his views as:

'On the basis of the meaning of above two words, seemingly cows were eaten earlier and more specifically the guests used to be welcome with beef. This is why the word *goghan* became synonymous of the guest'.

He further writes 'These two words *goghan* and *aghanya* narrate an unusual tale about ancient civilization. There are signs to prove that guests used to be treated with *mohoksh* (big bull). Similarly for getting a learnerd son, people used to have beef or mutton along with ghee'.

Shabdon ka Jeevan page 33-35

There is another example of *sanskrit* word *Puttra*, meaning for which exhibits extreme desire and dire need to escape from hell, in ancient India. The word *puttra* is used for son which is again composed of two words *put* and *tra*.

Put is used for hell while the protector or guardian is called *tra*. It leads us to believe that the son is called *puttra* because he is considered to be the saviour of parents from hell. In other words, the brightest aspect of having son is akin to deliverance from hell. It only serves to highlight the intensity of desire to escape from hell, in primitive India.

From the above observations one can ascertain that sometimes one single word turns good enough to accentuate the desires and faiths of nations. That single word provides the basis for a strong and irrefutable argument. Religious scriptures are not the only means to investigate the views and deeds of nations. This can also be found from archaeological discoveries and as a result, obtaining and examining vital informations from some articles, linguistics, folk-tales, folk-songs etc.

PRISTINE TRADITIONS IN INDIA

When both primitive and modern traditions of Indian society are examined in the light of Quran, it is found that the signs of truth are noticeably present. Although baseless traditions and views prevailing, have badly shattered and distorted the truth and reality, yet the signs of fidelity are not completely wiped out.

After the faith of monotheism, the concept of hereafter is one of the most important tenets of Islam. Unquestionably, for various reasons, views adverse to the concept of Hereafter have been encouraged and nurtured. But in reality this concept, though distorted, is still lingering in the hearts and minds of Indian nationals. It is undebatable that contradiction of views have undermined and been responsible to adversely effect the faith in Hereafter. Despite these concerted efforts, truth still prevails in the heart of hearts.

There is a pressing need to crystallize the truthfulness, superiority and supremacy of the concept of Hereafter in such a manner that all suspicious about its existence and form are dispelled and it is considered or accepted as

their own. Here is an effort, in the light of traditions and religious scriptures, to present certain aspects and reinforce the view that this is not at all an alien faith for Indian society. In contrast, it has been their aboriginal and ancient faith. Diminishing belief in original teachings, anomalous views, thoughts and philosophies engulfed the society which not only pushed the concept of Hereafter into oblivion but got it entangled in contradictory views.

It is imperative to honestly analyse the historical wrongs and present the true picture as to where and how, folks have drifted apart. In the absence of true concept of Hereafter, how a credible religion is lost into the darkness of epoch. As a result, it has immensely damaged religious sentiments and subsequently the quality of moral life.

Any faith other than divine will be inferior and degraded which will eventually lead to valueless and bankrupt mentality and society. A path or life-style chosen under such circumstances will not be universal and lack excellence. Such faith can not be expected to provide peace, comfort and tranquillity which have invariably been sought for by human nature.

THE LIFE WE SEARCH FOR

Islam does not consider the present world to be an ideal and permanent. The world, human nature has unceasingly been searching for entirely different where every aspiration and urge of his in being is complied with. Human nature is : to have an eternal life with never depleting luxuries and inexhaustible bounties. A world free from distress and grief, where truth emerges from all shackles and veils. Obviously, none of these characteristics and distinctions feature in the present life.

Factually, death has to follow this life and none of the prized and precious possessions is permanent. All human relations are fragile and vulnerable to separation. Every stark truth is just reflected, in this world, in one or the other form. In a nutshell, it seems impossible to fulfill human

desires and satisfy wishful needs in the present form of the universe.

Existing human talent and intelligence have many inherent limitations and lack permanence. Thus, fair and genuine human desires can only be accomplished in an entirely different world.

If such a world does not exist, then all legitimate human desires and reasonable wishes will be rendered meaningless. If noticed, nothing on the face of earth appears meaningless, which lends strength to the view that genuine human desires lingering in every mind should not be pointless either. On examining everyday life, the objectivity behind blowing winds, blooming flowers, bright sunshine etc. gets crystalised. The sun, the moon, the stars are performing a specific and pre-determined role. Presuming their functioning as spontaneous and unobjective is ridiculous. If hunger and thirst were meaningless, nature would not have satisfied them by delicious and considerable variety of food and plenty of water. Similarly, if carnal desires were not meant to be necessarily fulfilled, mortals would not born in pairs. The existence of both man and woman, is incomplete without each other. Their manifestation is indebted to a supreme being. Objects having strong mutual bonds, despite of being separate from one another, are necessarily united, somewhere. In fact, from the angle of God's cognizance and objective, they are one and its He who has linked the needs of one with another.

The point which needs profound attention is : when material needs and psychological wants are being taken care of so meticulously, how is it likely that virtuous desires and sincere feelings, which have not been created by us but our Creator, will ever be meaningless. Thus, it should be admitted and acknowledged that only Islamic view perfectly enlightens and excellently guides in this regard. Islam regards all legitimate desires or wishes as objective and meaningful. All such desires will be satisfied by Almighty. He plans to create another universe which will not only conform with all unfulfilled desires and wishes but exceed. All the elusive and unrealised dreams of this

life will there be taken care of. Life and all other delicacies will be eternal and inexhaustible. Good and Evil would be distinguished such that it will not entail any suspicion.

Loyal and obedient to God will reap rich dividends which will surpass all their expectations. However, the life of transgressor and rebellion individuals will prove to be humiliated, frustrated and fiercely painful.

Present world and its delicacies are only a reflection of the world to follow. This lively and fascinating world is only indicative of another real and lasting world. Everything encountered in the present world is a prelude, signalling the flavour of the forthcoming world. The significance of such a flavour or taste, though meagre and brief, cannot be either denied or undermined.

TWO WAYS TO TRUST

Basically there are two ways of trusting something. Firstly, through logical explanation in a cogent manner to make its possibility and rationale credible. Secondly, by displaying samples or exhibiting a chip of the block. Sample or chip is defined as 'small portion or part of something to show the nature and quality of the whole thing'.

A perceptible sample or explicit evidence often proves to be more effective than mere logical explanations. Such explanations can be credible only to limited extent, while physical display or exhibition not only makes it convenient to understand the truth but one also begins to feel and relish it. As there is considerable difference between falling in love and knowing about love, similar situation exists here too. To prove the truth, Quran has not only relied on logical explanations but has resorted to various other means as well. It has repeatedly pointed at living examples, to which it has called 'signs'. Quran has not only substantiated inornate truth of monotheism and existence of Hereafter by logical arguments but has cogently backed its contention by various signs and indicators encountered in daily lives. After taking a realistic view of these signs, it

can be safely inferred with strong conviction that denying the claim of Quran is akin to not only denying the existence of this universe but putting a question mark on human existence itself. Quran has exposed or unveiled the realities of life in the fascinating mirror of natural surroundings. Despite all these available evidences if one decides to turn a Nelson's eye on such realities, then he demonstrates to lack sensitivity and prudence. If one is genuinely searching for truth, he ought to be realistic and open-minded. Refusal to accept the truth and turning ones back from reality tend to show the signs of weakness and meanness. In such a situation, one may appear physically alive but his conscience is deemed to be dead and buried. His conscience is actually considered to be placed at sub-human level. Only an animate and a man of conscience demonstrates the courage and pep to recognise the truth in toto and follow it. If one does not wish to concede to the truth, Quran says :

"Quran is a reminder and explicit message to warn everyone who is alive, and ends argument with those who do not concede." 36 : 69-70

FAITHS AND VIEWS ADVERSE TO HEREAFTER

In sharp contrast to the Islamic concept of Hereafter, several theories and views have been floating around in the world. One school of thought, promoted by materialistic society, maintains that there is nothing to follow the existing world and there is nothing to look forward to, at the end of this life, which implies a life after death or calls for accountability. All the tales of Heavens and Hell are nothing but myths. Their argument is quoted in Quran in the following lines :

"They say, this is going to be our only death, we shall not be resurrected. If you are truthful, bring back our ancestors." 44 : 34-36

People with such frail and feeble arguments do not think for a while, to realise the blunder being committed by such attitude or understanding. They do not scratch their heads and see that if procreation is possible why resurrection is impossible.

There is another section of the society which recognises the concept of Hereafter and accepts the existence of Heaven and Hell but mixes it up with very abstruse and enigmatic arguments which render the entire concept of Hereafter meaningless. For instance, they say God crucified His son to atone for the sins of mankind. They further add, there is only one way to avoid disastrous consequences of one's evil deeds ; and that is to have faith in the son of God. Any individual of even average intelligence finds extremely difficult to digest such blending of myth with reality. If God decided to forgive the sins of all human being, He did not need to crucify His son. Only having faith in His son could have been adequate. Similarly, some people have the misconception that some noble souls of respective religions would serve as shields to save everyone from the hardship and humiliation of Hereafter. Their obstinacy will force the God to alter His decision or their mere recommendations will change human fate. People with such silly notions do not realise that if recommendations or obstinacy were to work, why would God feel the need to put human being through acid test by sending them down to the earth. On the one hand man has to prove his faith, loyalty and sincerity towards God, on the other hand he needs to face the harsh realities of life which makes it amply clear that these litmus tests were absolutely necessary, inevitable and must for evolving and building a strong human character. Unfortunately, instead of benefiting from such opportunities provided by present life, for the preparation of eternal life, man has foolishly chosen to let them go down the drain.

Heaven, after the day of Judgement, will be a unique place not only in respect of its physical appearance but will be ultimate in terms of purpose and objectivity as well. To deserve a berth in Heaven one needs to choose the singular

path of faith. This is the only course compatible with objective and meaningful elegance, grandeur and grace ; Heaven characterizes. In essence recognition of the Creator is not only the indication of faith but is identification of his own nature as well. Absence of true faith not only makes one unfamiliar with God but with himself too. This major flaw in human attitude makes him unqualified to comprehend the truth. As a result, entrance to the true world (Paradisè) gets shut on his face and he does not deserve anything other than endless misery, devastation and humiliation. Quran has repeatedly named this consequence as blaze and Hell.

Amongst different theories and thoughts about Hereafter, one is faith in reincarnation (*punarjanam*). Members of this school of thought believe : man is born recurrently, to requite for his deeds, in this very world. He returns to this world—either in human form or in the semblance of animals, insects, plants etc.—according to his action and moral behaviour. This viewpoint has enjoyed recognition and popularity in different eras at different parts of the world including Greece and Rome. Ancient history of Egyptian society also reflects signs of such a faith. Due to extraneous influences, even Jews got carried away by this belief at one point of time. Now, this faith is prevalent either among the tribal and brute societies of this world or it enjoys popularity and acceptance in India with Hindus, Buddhists and Jains.

The information provided by science and modern education about life has also ruled out all such theories which the belief of reincarnation relied upon. Even if it is seen in the light of knowledge and logic, no doubt is left in human mind about its spuriousness and fiction.

The theory of reincarnation is not only against the concept of Hereafter, it has also enormously undermined and damaged the religious feelings and sentiments. If this viewpoint is practically and widely adopted then religion will become worthless in the eyes of cultured and educated masses. Any possibility of religion emerging as a strong force would be crushed by such futile beliefs. Even the

subscribers to this viewpoint keep it off from their practical lives and do not wish to pursue this in their day-to-day lives, nor they can.

If common minds are receptive to and enticed by this viewpoint, it is merely due to its promulgation of lasting and unbreakable relation of man with the earth. The faith of reincarnation preaches that despite the death, an individual is always present in this world in the form of one or the other creature. Human attachment and affection with the soil does not allow him to visualise beyond this present world. Wish, one would realise that the possibilities and potentials of life are not confined to this mortal or transitory world alone, but beyond as well.

Without getting involved into logical, practical and psychological criticism of this faith, the attention of readers is drawn towards a startling fact. Zoological and botanical studies have explicitly proved the existence of unbridgable gap between men and animal, much less plants or trees. Plants and animals do not have a shred of self-consciousness which is the core of human character. It is a frail argument that plants and animals have human soul in their structures. There is absolutely no clue of the existence of human souls in animals or trees. Therefore it is baseless to assume that human souls are being punished in the form of plants and animals, for their past misdeeds.

If a 'prudent' person still argues that, to punish, human soul has been transformed into zoological soul which is free from self-conscious then he ought to know the vast difference between human soul and zoological soul. If human soul is transfused into zoological soul, it would completely lose its original character and spirit. Thus, a distinct soul will come into existence and in the absence of original entity and complexion, who will be punished.

Even if it is admitted that plants and animals are the product of any sin, this punishment is not being meted out to human soul, rather others, who are far from being sinners.

Plants and animals are a great boon for the entire humanity and considering them to be the product or consequence of a sin is gross injustice. The utility of these creatures in human life is immense which makes them absolutely indispensable. If they are the result of a human sin, committed in the past, then sins should become inevitable for the survival of mankind. Are we implying that all the lush greenery in the world and picturesque setting and wild life is attributed to the past human sins and crimes. If so, we shall not have the feelings of gratitude to God for all this and instead take a diagonally opposite view of His grace and blessings present in the form of plants and animals. It is also believed that physically and financially deprived condition of individuals are the results of their past misdeeds. This attitude may also lead us to see poor and afflicted people with contempt, as sinners of the past. This treatment of society adds further agony to their sufferings and lay the foundation of hatred and detestation in the society.

The concept of reincarnation is even against the teachings of *Vedas* which reveal that *Aryans* were believers of Hereafter. Their faith was: an individual gets a life after death (Hereafter) which is good or bad depending upon his actions or deeds.

During the period of *Brahmanas* and *Mantras*, the concept of *Pitralok* was pervasive which had no room for the faith called reincarnation. Subsequently, during the times of *Sutras* (*Sutra Kaal*) the faith of reincarnation also began to surface alongside *pitralok*. By the time, the period of *Puranas* arrived, both the viewpoints began to appear simultaneously. It is a truth that *Vedas* are absolutely against the concept of reincarnation. Any effort to prove this concept in the light of *Vedas* is unjust. Some people have even attempted to substantiate the theory of reincarnation through Quran but ended in vain as such efforts were far from truth and reality. Dr. Radhakrishnan writes in *Indian Philosophy* (Volume 1, page 12-116.) that the concept of reincarnation is not present in *Vedas*. Similar claims have been made by several other Hindu scholars.

Prominent orientalist Max Mueller who has exhaustively studied *Vedas*, writes 'The viewpoint of reincarnation is not available in *Vedas* whereas a concept of the Day of Judgement is present'.

Veda says 'By ignoring the Day of Judgement and overlooking the logic and teachings, they are crossing the limits fixed by me'. *Rig Veda*, 1-4-3

'Like fodder is fixed daily for the horse, O fire, egoist and affluent will also be questioned on the last day (Day of judgement) by me'. *Yajur Veda*, 50-11-75

Satyartha Vidya Alankar writes, 'I can even bet that *Vedas* do not advocate the viewpoint of reincarnation'.

Avagwan Page 104

Dr. Parada Chauhan remarks in his book 'Vedas do tell us about reincarnation but only once after this life, and not time and again. *Punarjanam and Vedas* Page 93

'To know the significance of fire, try to get the sun. Believers of both the lives, have been *Bhrig* and *Maat Rishva*, through me'. *Rig Veda*, 1:11:1.

A crystal clear faith provided by Quran, regarding the life after death, is conclusively fitting. This faith is not based on imaginary and speculative notions but on revelations of God. Besides other characteristics and peculiarities, Quran is a custodian too. In other words, it has preserved all divine teachings of the past. It is like the latest edition of an old published book which has also incorporated all the important material of previous editions, besides updated instructions and information. Studying Quran means learning about the main features of all divine books and knowing basic teaching of all the Prophets of God in the past. Basically, Quran does not present any strange or novel viewpoint and faith. When it affirms the faith in Hereafter, it acknowledges that the concept of *Akhirah* (Hereafter) has always been the only faith of all true religions in the past. Holy scriptures of preceding era show the signs and statements which support the notion that every true faith or religion has always been allied with the solitary concept of Hereafter. All other faiths and views are the products of human brains.

ANCIENT INDIA AND FAITH IN HEREAFTER

The concept of Hereafter is a universal faith. Assuming it to be Non-Indian and Non-Aryan would be a grave mistake. Concurring and adopting this faith or viewpoint does not construe as absorbing a Non-Indian or alien faith. Although when it comes to the truth, a sane and prudent man need not to be concerned about the point of its origin or be bothered whether it belongs to his own nation or imported from abroad. Truth, in whatever form and place is the common treasure, belongs to the entire humanity.

Without getting into greater details about other aspects of life, this discussion and review will be confined to Indian traditions with regard to the concept of Hereafter. It will be examined as to how, despite various distortions and changing tides of time, strong and irresistible influence of the faith in Hereafter has survived in Indian society. Even the theory of reincarnation has failed to completely wipe out the concept of Hereafter. It serves to prove that the concept of Hereafter is precisely compatible with human nature and psychology, and is so firmly rooted in Indian societies that it could not be washed away by the changing times and faiths.

While examining the traditions of Indian societies, studies seldom go beyond the culture and civilization of *Aryans*. Failure to see beyond that point can be attributed to either misconceptions or limitations and constraints. Very little efforts have been made to explore the civilizations prior to *Aryans*. There are limited and scarce means left to investigate about the languages, history and literature of *Pre-Aryan* era. Nevertheless, it is being widely accepted that prior to *Aryans*, a great *Dravidian* civilization has existed in India which left its footprints on the following civilizations. A stunning fact is coming to light that *Dravidian* civilization has been originally related to the pyramids of Egypt and Babilonia. Similarly, studies of *KOL* languages have also shown amazing realities. *KOL* civilization has, until recently, been ignored and projected as wild

and inhuman but latest research has drawn contrasting inferences.

KOL languages have proved to be related to some Australian and Asian languages too. Numerous views and faiths of many subsequent civilization which were presumed to be their own were also originated, in fact, from *KOL* civilizations.

WHAT IS DEATH?

Let us first examine the traditional Indian viewpoint about death. *Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharat, Geeta* and several other Indian scriptures reveal that death does not end life, only physical form of body comes to an end. Even after death, an individual continues to exist with his personality or character.

'One who considers the soul as mortal and the one who deems it dead, both of them are ignorant'.

Geeta 2:19

'O Arjun, everyone was bodyless prior to birth and will be the same after death. Only in transition do they get body. Then, what is the concern about this?' *Geeta* 2:28

It's fairly apparent from above quotations that soul has its own entity, independent of the body. Despite the demise of body, soul lives on.

(*PITRALOK*)

PURGATORY PERIOD OR INTERMEDIATE REALM

Where and how a dead man resides through the intervening period, between the time of death and the Day of Judgement? *Vedas* have thrown some light on this state of a dead person by presenting the concept of *pitralok* (ancestral world). This is the destination of all the ancestors and others who die. Besides *Vedas, Purans* and *Mahabharat* have also dealt with this state of a dead person

in greater details. Some of the instances mentioned are placed below: *Rig Veda*, has admonished a dying person by saying 'some ancestors are sitting by ghee, and honey is flowing for them, you go to them who are immortal due to meditation. Those who have reached heaven because of their mystic exercises. You also go towards them, who have strived. You too go towards those who diligently fought in the battlefield, laid their lives or who donate generously. You march towards those who have deserved the rewards of good deeds, who have widened the fountain of virtue and who have borne the fruits of mysticism and devotion'. 10:104

Mahabharat says, 'soul comes out of six compartments (of body) and according to its complexion and height, enters into another invisible body. This soul is imperceptible. The soul of eight organs which is latent and remains mobile. It does not perish by emendation, burning or roasting. Vicious, either weeping or groaning in pain, march towards *Yamraj*. People scolded, perplexed, shivering in fear, admonished and thrashed, go towards *Yamraj*.

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'People can be categorised into three sections, according to their deeds The three categories are for high, middle and low class of people. Chaste and smiling! How the envoys of *Yamraj* take them? Listen that: The envoys of *Yamraj*, well attired, take with respect (highly virtuous) people through comfortable and pleasant route. Dressed like cops, legates take moderately virtuous people through mediocre path. Emissaries dressed like undertakers take low (vice people), scolding and dragging with noose around their neck, through terribly painful passages. Virtuous people are respectfully welcomed by *Yamraj*. He warmly embraces them and enquires about their well being. After praising their virtuous deeds, *Yamraj* shows them their permanent residence. Virtuous people take *Yamraj's* permission and turn towards heaven':

Mahabharat Page 45, 226, 227

'..... dead man, thinking and somehow holding himself, reaches 84 *Yojan* long and 84 *Yojan* wide *Dharam Rajpur*. Bright and glittering *Dharam Rajpur* (World of *Yamraj*) full of entertainment and houris and 84 lakh Hells exist there. Thirteen (13) guards stand in front of *Yamraj*, who after thoroughly screening, repeatedly present the case of good or evil deeds to *Yamraj*. Even the most concealed and covert actions of an individual are communicated to *Yamraj* by *Chatragupta*, who keeps the record of all human actions. *Chatragupta* can see and hear of far and away.'

Guruda Puran Preet Kalp 22:1:4

'*Yamraj* does not divest them of their virility, they get conveyance on which they fly in the sky, they are rewarded with wings which take them beyond skies. This place also has, promised canals of cream, honey, liquor, milk and curd,

Yajur Veda

Pirtalok is not a dry and dead place. Every luxury required, to lead a lavish life is present there. *Upanishad* and *Brahminas* says 'One pleasure of *pitras* (dead ancestors) is equal to 100 pleasures of one living individual'.

Where do dead people stay? *Veda* says their destination is *Antriksh* (space). *Atharva Veda* says; 'Ancestors live on the third stratum, above space'. 18:2:48.

'Ancestors live on the upper part of the moon'.

Shidhant Shromani

'Those who have been put on blaze and who have not been, enjoy sops and oblations in the intermediate sky'.

Yajur Veda 19:60

It can be inferred from the statements of *Vedas* and *Shastras* that *Yam*, mentioned above, is the King or Custodian of purgatory world. Therefore it is stated :

'Souls are placed in the *Yamllok* or Kingdom of *Yamraj*'.

Yajur Veda 19:45

'As *Yam Devta* stays in the space, ancestors who are his subjects, are also considered to belong to space'.

Narkat 11:18

'Angles of death have been called *Yamdoot* (envoy of Yam) or *Mrityudoot* (envoy of death)'.

Atharva Veda 18:2:27

According to the version of *Vedas*, human soul is taken away by *Yamdoot*:

'*Yamdoot* is very wise, he sends the soul of dead to purgatory for becoming ancestor'. *Atharva Veda* 18:2:27

'Meet *Yamraj*, see the spirits of ancestors and get the reward of virtuous deeds and liberty in superior heavens. Get rid of vice and misdeeds to obtain bright body.

Rig Veda

It must be noted, here ancestors do not mean only forefathers but includes other relatives, both elder and younger as well.

Purgatory world, in Islamic (Arabic) terminology *Aalam-e-Barzakh*, means a curtain or screen between any two objects. *Upanishad* had termed it as *Sandhya* (evening) because it serves as a bridge between present life and hereafter, like evening does between the day and night.

'There are two worlds for a man, in reality. One is this universe and one *Parlok* (hereafter). The third roost is called *Sandhya*: That is a place to sleep. A person halting there could see both the worlds, present universe and hereafter'.

Brahadaranyaka Upanishad Chapter 4

Kath Upanishad & *Shatpath Brahmana* affirm that the state of soul in *Purgatory* period would be dreamlike. *Shankaracharya* who is an eminent exegesist of *Upanishads* also confirms that factually there are only two worlds. One is the present universe where we are breathing and the other one is hereafter: life after death. Third, transitory place is *sandhya*: the 'screen' which exists between these two worlds. Thus, it is quite evident that Indian scriptures and archaic perceptions have widely discussed the belief in life after death which has positive correlation with Islamic viewpoint and does not at all conform with the theory of reincarnation.

HEREAFTER OR PARLOK

Quran claims that the functioning of entire universal machinery and administration will be destroyed and devastated, at one point of time. Thereafter, the world will be re-created. All the dead people, existed in this world at one or the other point of time, would be resurrected and their deeds and creeds would be thoroughly and impartially judged by Allah. Everybody will be entitled to withdraw from his account, what he has deposited in this world. Everyone will reap there, what is sowed in this world. Heaven or Hell will be allocated strictly on the basis of beliefs and conduct. Complete destruction of the present universe is called *pralay* or *qayamat* in Islam. Besides Quran and Bible several Indian scriptures have also notified the imminence of *Pralay*. For instance, *Shrimad Bhagvat* (4:14-18) has clearly stated that neither this earth nor the sky, only *Brahma* will be left alive. Subsequently, the proceedings of hereafter will set off. Life after death, according to *Vedas*, would be marvellous. Such life, in *Veda* is interpreted as *divya Janma* (divine birth), achieved by those who lead the lives, strictly by the commandments of God. The secret of their eminence and sanctity is: God has permanent and prominent place in their lives. This status can never be achieved by merely performing the rituals. *Veda* says 'Divine life is not for those who perform *havan*, but who obey the Guardian of the universe'.

Hereafter is an accomplished and perfect world where men would be fully awake and equally sensitive. *Kathopanishad* explains that in Purgatory or intermediary realm, the state of soul is of sleep. The state of soul in the present world is of moderate activation while wide and perfect awakesness would be achieved only in Hereafter.

Virtuous and pious would be adequately rewarded in the form of Heaven in the Hereafter, while corrupt and vice would be destined to reach the Hell. *Vedas* have named Heaven as *Swarg* and Hell as *Nark*. As presumed by some thinkers, Heaven does not merely mean a condition or state which could reign on any individual in the present world. In essence, Heaven itself is a complete and full fledged world.

This is the reason why in *Vedas* heaven and its substitute term life *Sakrtassya*, *Sakartam*, *Dev*, *Nakam* are presented in alliance with the term *Lok*: world. (Please refer to *Yajur Veda* 15:10-14, *Atharva Veda* 4:34:2 & 5-7, 9:5:18, 2:10:7, 9:5:9, 18:3:71 etc.). Hence heaven is called *Dev Lok*, *Nakam Lokam*, to show that it as an independent entity. Besides, all the above terms denote to the highest standards of life. *Naka* means, that achieving this status construes to painless and smooth life: *Nirukhte* 2:14. *Brahmin Granth* also approves the above statement of trouble free and easy going life. *Brahman Granth* is in fact an exposition of *Veda*.

Kam means pleasure and comfort. By adding two negative character 'NA' and 'AA' it become *Naakam* while adding only 'AA' makes *Akam*. *Naakam* means happiness and relief while *Akam* means pain and sorrow. the word 'Dev' also means ease thus *Niruktha* says: 'Dev is the name of soothe'. *Swarg*, *Naakam* and *Dev* are said to be places of comfort. *Niruktha* further adds: 'Only virtuous and pious go there' 2:14

In *Manu* also, it is explicitly clear from the appearance of the term *swarg* that it is an exclusive and special place. For instance, phrases like '..... he goes to the *swarg*' 3:18 '....he goes to high and respectable place', 3:93 '....he goes to the world of permanence' 2:5, keep appearing very often.

In *shastras* and *vedas*, the term *lok* has been used to mean place or spot. It is appeared 28 times in *Rig veda* and twice in plural form as well. In *Yajur veda*, the word *lok* has been employed approximately 50 times. *Sain Acharya* has also taken the meaning 'place' in each of these instances. Thus it would be erroneous to mean *swarg* or Heaven as a state of mind or feelings.

SCALE OF DEEDS

Only the most deserving ones would be rewarded with *swarg* or Heaven. A complete and proper account is being maintained for every bit of good or bad human action

in the present world. According to the holy writings of Hindus, this account is being kept by *Devta*s. *Manu* states 'Sinners think that their wrongs committed in privacy are not being noted, however they are not just seen by *Devta*s but their own conscience is also a witness'. 8:84

In *Purans*, the accountants of human actions and deeds have been called *Chitragupt* while Quran has used the term *Karaman Katibeen* for the same functionaries. *Shatpath Brahmin* has also touched upon the scale of deeds in Hereafter in the following words:

'In the world to follow, human deeds and misdeeds are weighed on a scale. Whichever way it tilts, they will have to follow, whether good or bad. Those who believe in this, lead a cautious and scrupulous life in this world and escape from the hardships of the forthcoming world.

Kand 11 Parpathak 2 Brahmin 7 Kandha 33

In other words, those who trust this concept of the scale of deeds, keep soul searching, perpetually, in present world to avoid any likelihood of disbalance in this scale of Hereafter. Such introspection assures them a life free from the rage of God.

WHERE IS HEAVEN?

It will be colossal misconception to assume that the present world is an end in itself. This is, *en effect*, merely a means to an end, to be followed in the form of Heaven or Hell. This is not only proved by Quran but Hindu Scriptures too. According to the delineation of *Vedas*, life in heaven is in addition to the present life. This is the reason why proximal terms have been used for the present world like *imam, ayam, ata, atrasiman et al.* While terms indicating remoteness have been used to characterise the Heaven; like *amam, tatar, tasman, paraman et sic de ceteris*. The use of parlance in such a manner makes it amply clear that Heaven is an entirely different domain.

Besides, various *mantras* of *vedas* have professed swarg as *tritya rajse, trinaka, trived, tribhay kandya* and

tritsyam signifying that it is a third world, third universe of ease and relief, third realm in the sky, which is in the third category and third from here, respectively.

Not even a single *veda* has called the present world as paradise. *Rig veda* says 'Third universe (swarg) is the one which is up there under the light of the sky'. 1:155:3

'From the back of the earth I climbed up to horizon. From horizon went up to the sky and from thereon I reached illuminated place *swarg* (Heaven)'.

Atharva Veda 4:14:17/67

This is quite evident from the above illustrations that Heaven is an exclusive place; far superior and excellent from the present world. *Atharva Veda* has also described it as *Param Lok* (Prime world).

WHAT IS HEAVEN (SWARG)

Heaven is a desirous and yearning object for mortals. An entity, aspired by all, which is the ultimate human wish for tranquillity and placidity. A flawless world and free from all shortcomings. *Rig Veda* says O *Indra*, take me to a place where life is endless, never-ending world with widespread illumination and splendour of eternity'. 9:113:7

'Make me immortal in the world of pleasant desires which is a glorious world of Brahma (Creator). A world with comfortable subsistence and full of thrill and delight'.

9:113:10

'Where exhilaration and pleasure, delicacies and fascinations are there, where connoisseurs will find everything to their preferences, already available. Give me salvation in such a world'.

9:113:11

'Make me immortal in a place where there is no restriction on movement. On the upper part of the sky where illuminated realms are full of brilliance'. 9:113:8

'Give me incessance in a world where three delights of *mod*, *mudah* and *pramod* are available and where long cherished desires are fulfilled'.

9:113:11

The three delights mentioned above are related to venereal pleasure. In particular, *Pramod* is quoted in *vedas* for sensual delights or pleasures only. It divulges that in Heaven people will be entitled for wives too. This is also proved by other statements of *vedas*. For instance *Atharva veda* states 'one who splurges will get pleasant heaven, first. Then he gets well attired pretty women and hard liqueur'. 9:107:10

'They are free from bones, go to neat and refulgent heaven.... there are plenty of women for them in heaven'.
Atharva veda 4:43:2

People will not grow old in heaven and will be immortal: 'There is no apprehension in Heaven. There will be no death, nor any fear of ageing. People will get rid of hunger and thirst and enjoy the life of Heaven'. (13)

Atharva veda further states 'This Heaven is brimming with nectar'. 18:4:4

'O man, watch the path of *rit* followed by virtuous, cautious and *angras*. You follow only this route towards Heaven where *Aditya Dev* consumes honey'.

Atharva veda 18:4:3

'Give me perpetuity where all wishes of desires are accomplished'.
Rig Veda 111:7:11

Atharva veda claims that no one would be evicted from there: 'Such immortal, you will not die, will not die, do not scare. No body dies there nor falls into any murky depths'. 8:2:24

'This world of salvation has perpetual refulgence'. Every comfort and illumination is there. *Anukam* is there in this Heaven. Worlds are dazzling there. *Kam*, *nakam*, *sudha*, *tripti*, *anand*, *mod* and *pramod* are all there. All human desires are attained there'. *Rig veda* 9:113:7-9

'Like cucumber gets detached from the creeper, may I get extricated from death and not dissociate from incessance'.
Rig veda 7:59:12

Heaven is not merely spiritual, everyone will live there in sheer physical appearance. Thus *veda* says 'O *Ishwar*,

bestow upon them the universe of souls and their own body, according to your wish'. 10:15:4

'O *Pitron* (ancestors), be delighted with body, in the heaven'. *Atharva veda* 18:4:64

'May my soul, after fair enlightenment, get the body'.
Atharva veda 18:2:10

Shatapath Brahmana states 'Enlighten us in heaven, may we live their with wife and offsprings.... free from any handicap, flaw and deficiency, we see parents and kids.' "*Katho Panishad* has lauded heaven in these words:" (6-8)

There is no fear in Heaven...., nobody is scared of ageing. In Heaven, man is thrilled having overcome hunger and thirst and free from all sorrows' (1:12)

SOME VISTAS OF HEAVEN

Placed below are some scenes and peculiarities as described in *vedic* Heaven (*swarg*): 'Thousands of canals with flavour of honey will flow in the third sky (*swarg*)' 9:74:6

'Ponds of ghee, lakes of honey, flowing canals of sweet, brimming milk, liquor, curd and water will be presented to you in Heaven, and all pools of lotus will be given to you'. *Atharva veda* 4:34:6

'Lord has come to me with the canals of honey, ghee and liquor'. *Atharva veda* 6:25:10

'Benefactors get the status of comfort and gaiety (heaven), first. They are provided with well dressed damsels and peg of hard liquor'. *Atharva veda* 10:107:9

'I pray for these *apsaras* (houris) who are to give enormous pleasure'. *Atharva veda* 2:2:2

Kashtiki Brahmana states 'Five hundred houris come to him, one hundred of them with garlands, one hundred with fragrant dentifrices, One hundred with *kochoor* and saffron talc. One hundred with expensive and elegant jewellery and dresses. Hundred houris holding flowers in

their hands, come and spruce up this celestial with ornaments'. 1:4

According to the statement or explanation of *Mahabharat*, heaven is, in fact, the reward of virtuous deeds. *Indrapuri*, is the best and most preferred part. There is a *Nandan van* (garden) where people assume physical appearance of their desires and rejoice with *apsaras* (houris). *Adi* 89:16:19

There is no ageing, distress or fatigue. There is no fear either. Both *Apsaras* & *Gandharvas* (houris and ghilman) will dance and entertain the celestials through music and songs'. *Sabha* 7

Upanishads also acknowledge that souls never return from the heaven. It is also said that there is no sin, nor a shred of obscurity and darkness. There is no ailment either as this is the place of retribution for good deeds and always remains bright and effulgent.

Some of the heavenly trees are also mentioned in *vedas*. For instance, 'These trees where fascinating birds enjoy delicious fruits. They perch on such trees..... At the peak of them, they say *peelam* is marvelous but can not be gained by man who does not recognise father (Lord)'. *Rig Veda mandal* 1:64:20-22

'There is a pipal tree in the third sky above us. That is the abode of *devtas*. They have obtained a tree of *kisht* which is either the fountain of immortal life or originated from the well-spring of eternity'. *Atharva veda*.

'The joy of songs and music is also available in heaven'. *Rig veda* 10:135:7, *Atharva veda* 4:37:4

'There, songs will be sung by *vishwa surbhi*, the resident of mid space, *gandharva* of heaven'.

Rig veda 10:39:7

This music and song affair has been mentioned in *Chandogya upanishad*. 'If he is longing for a place of song and music then his thoughts will reflect song and music and he gets pleasure by securing it'. 8:2:8

'Brave who dies in the war should not be mourned for, because the demise of audacious does not call for bereavement. He achieves dignity in the heaven. Those who are eliminated in the war, the rituals of *pinda pani*, bath and wash need not be followed for. To welcome the martyrs of war, thousands of pretty houris rush towards them and each of them wishes to be their spouse'.

Mahabharat shanti 98:44:47

'Spick and span *nandan van* (gardens) are meant for the pleasure of virtuous. There is no requisition of chow, no boredom of weather, neither is any threat. There is no filthy or ominous object. Pleasantly satisfying and perfumed winds blow from every angle. *Mani*, all the songs are delightful and delectable. No distress, senescence, and exertion nor any sorrow or grief. *Mani*, this kingdom is the reward of good deeds. Because of their virtuous actions, they are born here. Bright and attractive bodies of those who are born here are attributed to their deeds. They are not conceived because of their parents. They are free from perspiration, stink and defection. There is no pollution or dust to spoil their clothes. Their fascinating, fragrant and angelic garlands never wither..... Envy, grief and fatigue do not touch them and they are free from greed and grudge'.

Mahabharat, Ban 261:9:16

'There is no anguish and voracity, nor malice and rife. All of them remain young and live with their spouses and sparkle like thousand suns'. *Devi Bhagvat* 12:12:50

WHO DESERVES HEAVEN

Who will have the privilege to enter Heaven? Who will be deprived of this? Some relevant extracts of *vedas* and other statements are presented below:

'Virtuous and wise individual is the darling of God'.

Rig veda 10:31:2

'Man should pursue the path of truth with humility and obedience'.

Rig veda 10:31:2

'You have achieved the place (heaven) in reward of good deeds'. *Atharva veda* 2:10:7

'One who sacrifices white legged sheep for achieving a place in future, climbs up to the heaven; where a frail does not pay tax to the mighty'. *Eizan* 3:29:3

'Heaven in the sky, is meant for philanthropist'.

Rig veda 10:125

'Those who donate, with faith, are entitled for heaven'. *Atharva veda* 9:5:18

'I had this money out to *Brahmins*. I make way to the heaven through *pitralok* (intermediary realm) only'.

Atharva veda 18:4:25

'Food, in swarg, full of *amrit* (nectar) and energy is given to those who sacrifice'. *Atharva veda* 25:4:18

Getting heaven does not merely require deeds but devotion and sincerity as well:

'Those who are sincere will achieve heaven'.

Atharva veda 6:122:3

'O Arjun, if you loose your life in this battle, you will get heaven'. *Geeta* 2:37

In the last episode of *Geeta*, Shri Krishna says that people win over the Lord through their own deeds, which is factually the purpose of life.

'Sacrificing in the hope of requital and retribution will get canals full of ghee and achieve all his desires in the heaven;'. *Atharva veda* 18:4:5

'Benefaction for cultivating friends or achieving ulterior motives will remain in this world like a blind cow within one cow-shed'. *Manu* 3:141

'By obeying mother present world, by pleasing father purgatory world and by obliging the mentor, heaven is achieved'. *Manu* 2:212

Vyas Muni says 'Compassionate (one who obliges) will go to heaven and persecutor hell'.

WHAT IS HELL (NARAK)

In the life of hereafter, *Nark* (hell) is the destination of antagonist of truth and who are perverted. *Vedas* affirm that hell is a place of darkness. Sinners and *adharmis* (transgressors) are sent there. There are several hells and all are awfully dark. *Yajur veda* has described the hell as: 'Those realms are sunless. It is gloomy all around. Those who commit suicide are sent there'. 40:2

'One who taints his heart is said to be falling into this mean place'. *Atharva veda* 20:128:2

Ishavasgopanishad has also equated hell with gloom and said: devotees of ignorance will enter pitch dark worlds. *Purans* and specifically *vishnu puran* (2:6:1-29) and *shrimad bhagvat* (5:6:1-37) extensively discuss about the hells. *Narks* are said to be in hundreds and thousands. Minimum figures attached to hell is seven, mentioned by *vishnu puran* commentary of *yog sutra* written by *vyas* (3-26) and exegesis of *shankaracharya* on *Vedanta*.

(3-1-15)

Subsequently, there numbers have swelled to 21. There names can be located in *manu smarti* (4:88-90) and *shrimad bhagvat* (5:26:7). *Vishnu puran* and *shrimad bhagvat* (2:6:2-5) and (7:26:6) respectively have even mentioned about 28 hells. *Sukha sagar* has elaborately classified the allocation of hells according to specific misdeeds or vices. Placed below are some categorisations quoted from *sukh sagar* (page 293-296) and *shrimad bhagvat* (5:26)

'One who is under the airs of "mine" and "me", antagonises with people and concentrates only on patronising his own family will be dispatched to the hell called *ryrav*. Man or women having incestuous relationship are whipped and sent to *taprasarmi* named hell. Thereafter, they are tied with hot ironed idols for burning, incessantly.... Emperors or their functionaries who destroy the places of worship or create hurdles on the path of truth are dipped in *vytarni* river, full of urine, blood hair, nail, bones et al.... One who falsely testifies, will be thrown down, in

the hell named *avechi*, from a very high mountain. Those *brahmins*, *kshatryas*, *vyshya* or their females, who are explicitly alcoholic are put in a hell titled *ayahpan* where *yamdoot* pour hot melted steel in their mouth... Those having hanker after wealth and regret for its potential exhaustion, multiply it in greed like satan, do not expend or donate, will be sent to hell under the banner of *soochi mukh*. *Yamdoot* prick them there, with needles'.

If twenty one types of hell are abstracted, there remain mainly seven categories. *Vedas* have categorically stated about hell. For instance Rig Veda says 'They are sinners to the core and are liars and treacherous. They are liable for the creation of this extremely deep place (hell) i.e. (their misdeeds necessitated the need of its existence)'.

Rig veda 4:5:5

'O Indra and Som, sin around sinners boils over like water of a pan on the fire'.

Rig veda 7:104:2

'Throw them, who perpetrate misdeeds or sins, into an irretrievably deep and dark pit. None of them will ever be able to exit from there'.

Mantra 3

Above excerpts have explicated the perpetuity or eternity of hell. This view is precisely in line with the Islamic concept of hell.

'Bright and glittering *dharmrajpur* is full of entertainers and houris. There exist 84 lac hells as well'.

Gurd puran, preetkalp 4:19

In Hindu mythology, eighty four lac species are prominent and the soul supposedly rotate among them, due to reincarnation. Here, this is being taken to mean 84 lac hells. *Gurd puran* further throws light on this belief by mentioning 84 lac hells and adds that twenty one of them are the most dreadful and scaring

Preetkalp 5:20

WHO WARRANTS HELL

Nark or hell is meant for freaky, mean and vicious section of the mankind. It is a destination for those who do not deserve to be awarded a berth in heaven.

'Terrified by Varun, close colleagues of my opponents will enter an obscure and murky world'.

Atharva veda 10:3:9

'It is said that hell is the destination of those who do not, despite their begging, donate to *brahmins*'.

Atharva veda 12:4:36

'One who, by deceiving the husband, establishes illicit relationship with his wife is sent to an isolated and obscure corner of the hell by the guards of *yamraj*. After reaching there he groans in pain and agony. He gets blind and stunned, remains there like an uprooted tree'.

Devi Bhagvat 8:5-6

'Self centered, arrogant and the one who envies others, earns livelihood for his family by deceiving others reaches here (hell), after the death, due to his vicious deeds'.

Ezan 8:8-9

'Those who traverse or infringe the limits; fall in the drowning river. *Narada!* This river is the drench of the fort of hell'.

Ezan 8:39-40

BUDDHISM AND THE NOTION OF HEREAFTER

Buddhism and Jain religion too have traces of the conception of Heaven and Hell. Following are the excerpts of the scriptures of the above two faiths:

'The assumptions of philanthropy being meaningless, there is nothing called good or bad deeds, nothing is this world nor hereafter, Head-man of the family! These are irreverent beliefs and practices. Toeing such lines leads towards the hell, after death'.

Majhem Naka 1:5:1

'Avoid misdeeds and follow the religion. One who does so, gets relief in this as well as world hereafter'.

Dhampad: Lok Waggu 3

'The world is like a blind, does not understand the reality. There is enormous dearth of people who rush towards the heaven, like a bird free from the trap'.

Dhampad:Lok Waggu 8

'One who abjures the truth by fibbing and exceeds the limits of religion, and the one who is not bothered about hereafter, can sin as worse as possible'.

Ezan : Lok Waggu 10

'A strayed man who touches a strange women meets four consequences : (a) gathers sins, (b) does not sleep peacefully, (c) gets humiliated or censured in the world and (d) goes to hell'.

Dhampad Niray Waggu 22:4

'He (sinner) is subjected to climbing up and down, the mountains of glowing embers.... He is put upside down in a blazing and sizzling hot iron pot where he foams and gets cooked. While frothing, once he comes up, once goes down and once slanted'.

Khudavand Ke Peyambar 3:3

'Then *Bhikshus*, he is taken out and placed on the surface, by the guards of hell who say: O man, what do you want? He says, I am hungry. Then O *Bhikshus*, the cops of hell open his mouth and put into it, a red hot steel rod. This burns his lips, throat, chest and lever and pierces through entrails and finds way out, through the lower part.... Escorts of the hell will ask him again, what do you want? He says, I am athirst. Then O *Bhikshus*, his mouth will be opened by guards through a sizzling hot iron rod and will be forced to drink hot melted copper. This takes his intestines out, through the lower part'.

Ezan

'A gambler may make fortune in the very first attempt. *Bhikshus*, this stake (gain) is meagre in volume, much higher stake (gain) than this is, that an *Aalim* does viture though heart, soul and tongue and leaves behind the body after death, to be born in the fruitful world of heaven'.

Majhem Naka 3:3

A study of Buddhist concept of heaven reveals that all sources and means of pleasure and comfort would be available in heaven including health, wealth, youth glamour and pretty women. On the other hand, vicious and sinners will go through every possible distress, persecution and torture, which will indeed be terribly painful and awfully frightening.

CONCLUSION

Factually, the concept of *parlokvad* (hereafter) is the cardinal point of Indian religions. it lends further credibility to the statement of Quran: the preachers and followers of truth have all long sought its recognition and propagation to accomplish grace in Hereafter. According to the message of Quran, present world will come to an end but the world to follow (hereafter) will be eternal. The entire humanity will be divided into two parts:

One group will enter Heaven, while the other would be consigned to flames. This is, now, to be decided by man which group he wishes to be a part of.

APPENDIX

Gist of the above discussion makes it amply clear that every human being will be accountable to God, after death, for his deeds in present life. Preceding assessment about the concept of Hereafter reminds us the significance and delicacy of the opportunity given in the form of present life. We are the sole decider whether to choose lasting triumph and prosperity or prefer to opt for perpetual humiliation and defeat. If we, consciously or unconsciously, bargain for destruction and devastation by inviting the wrath and anger of Allah, it would unquestionably be the gravest mistake. We have abundant opportunity today, in our life to prove wisdom and save ourselves from inordinate loss. Worldly gains are short-lived, true gain is the gain in Hereafter and vice versa. We come across numerous examples of transient success stories in every day life. Thrills and adventures, comforts and luxuries of present life are surely lost. We tend to forget both anguish and joy but the life after death would be completely different where both sorrow and happiness, distress and pleasure would be unending. Fortunate and felicitous are those who will be accorded warm welcome, everlasting luxuries and pleasures while the most regretting and disheartening will be the fate of those who will be deprived of a cosy and comfortable life, forever. They will face the rage and affliction of Allah.

As mentioned before, our lives are full of possibilities which should be exploited to the fullest possible extent. If we continue to ignore our true objectives and responsibilities, regrettably, we shall never be saved from the dreadful consequences of Hereafter. If we fail to capitalise on this first and final chance, given in the form of life, we shall never ever be able to repair the damage.

May Allah save us from horrible consequences.

AUTHOR'S BOOKS IN URDU & HINDI AT A GLANCE

| | |
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| ❑ Hadees ka Tarruf | Urdu |
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| ❑ Ved Aur Qur'an | <i>Hindi</i> |
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